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Accent

on restoration

Local buildings win restoration awards

By KEVIN NIENDORF
Herald Staff Writer

Three owners of local historic buildings are among eight Utah winners slated to receive the 1991 Utah Heritage Foundation Preservation Awards for their success in the restoration and reuse of historically significant buildings.

The three local buildings include the Heber City Municipal Building/Wasatch State Tabernacle, 75 N. Main St., Heber; the Kearns Hotel, 94 W. 200 South, Springville; and the M.L. Bigelow & Co., Inc./Second Ward Building, 130 W. 100 South, American Fork.

The awards, presented annually since 1968, exemplify the foundation's goal of encouraging steady, yet sensitive, growth in Utah's communities while at the same time protecting the diversity and individuality which is characteristic of the state, said spokesperson Michael Leventhal.

"I think the award is deserved," said Heber City Mayor Scott Wright, of the LDS Tabernacle turned into city offices. "It turned out to be a pretty nice building. We're proud of it."

The tabernacle was built between 1887-1889, and like the other two local buildings being

demolished and it was used as a cultural and theatrical center before being remodeled.

"It was totally gutted on the inside," said Wright, of the remodeling process. "Only the shell remained. Everything on the inside is new."

The exterior appearance has been essentially unaltered.

Wright said items inside the building, such as the hard benches, were sold off to area buyers. Wright said a 4-foot section of a bench is even located at his store.

When Wright, a Heber native, was asked if he had good memories of attending church inside the tabernacle as a child, he was quick to respond.

"I don't know if they're good memories, the benches were pretty hard," he said.

The Kearns Hotel in Springville was originally completed in 1890 by Moses and Anne Kearns Johnson. Through the years, the Springville landmark has also been known as the Manitou Hotel and most recently the Valley Tavern Hotel.

It had always operated as a hotel until it was shut down in 1980 and faced demolition. Springville resident Craig Lott and Spanish Fork resident Randy Paulson bought the building

person of the Springville historical preservation organization, said the Kearns Hotel is scheduled to open again in December.

"It's been an eye-catching event around Springville to have it come back to life," said Breckenridge. "We were thrilled they got the award. They've labored over the building with love."

Breckenridge said she thinks the new building will have corporate suites and some overnight rooms.

She said had the building not been purchased, it would have been demolished and Springville would have another weedy lot.

The owner of the M.L. Bigelow and Co., Inc./Second Ward Building said it's nothing less than a miracle his building still exists.

"Of the four original churches in the city, two were either burned down or demolished and the third was completely remodeled and doesn't look anything like it used to," said Mike Bigelow. "Our building was petitioned to the city for demolition in 1983 by the LDS Church."

Bigelow said the LDS Church had a policy to sell surplus churches only to other churches or schools. When it had no

He said the building has worked well for the manufacturing of organs because of the high ceilings necessary to construct the tall organ pipes.

Bigelow said the building, built in 1903, is unique because of its similarity to the look of a Protestant Church building.

"People say it's hard to believe it was an LDS Church building because of its exterior work and stain-glass windows," said Bigelow. "But that's how they built all of the churches back then."

Bigelow said he isn't surprised the building will receive the award because of "its importance to the community."

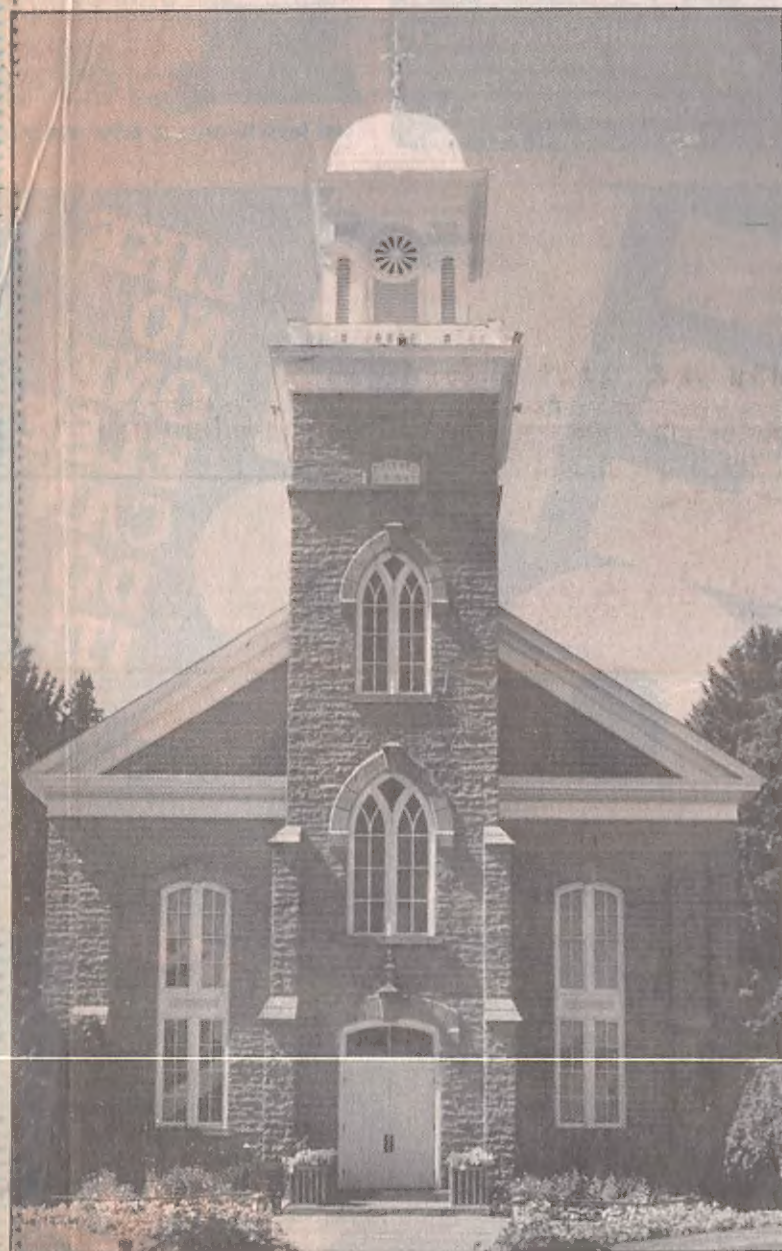
"We feel the building actually belongs to the community even though we have the title to it," he said.

The other eight Utah buildings include the Terry-Gile Mansion, 1229 E. South Temple, Salt Lake City; "Crystalwood," 1289 E. Canyon Creek Road, Bountiful; The General Engineering Building, 159 Pierpont Avenue, Salt Lake City.

Also, the Salt Lake City and County Building, 451 S. State Street, Salt Lake City; South High School/Salt Lake City Community College, 1575 S. State Street; The Ephraim Co-



awarded, the tabernacle at one point faced demolition. Residents in 1964 voted not to have and are currently leading a remodeling project. Donna Breckenridge, chair-



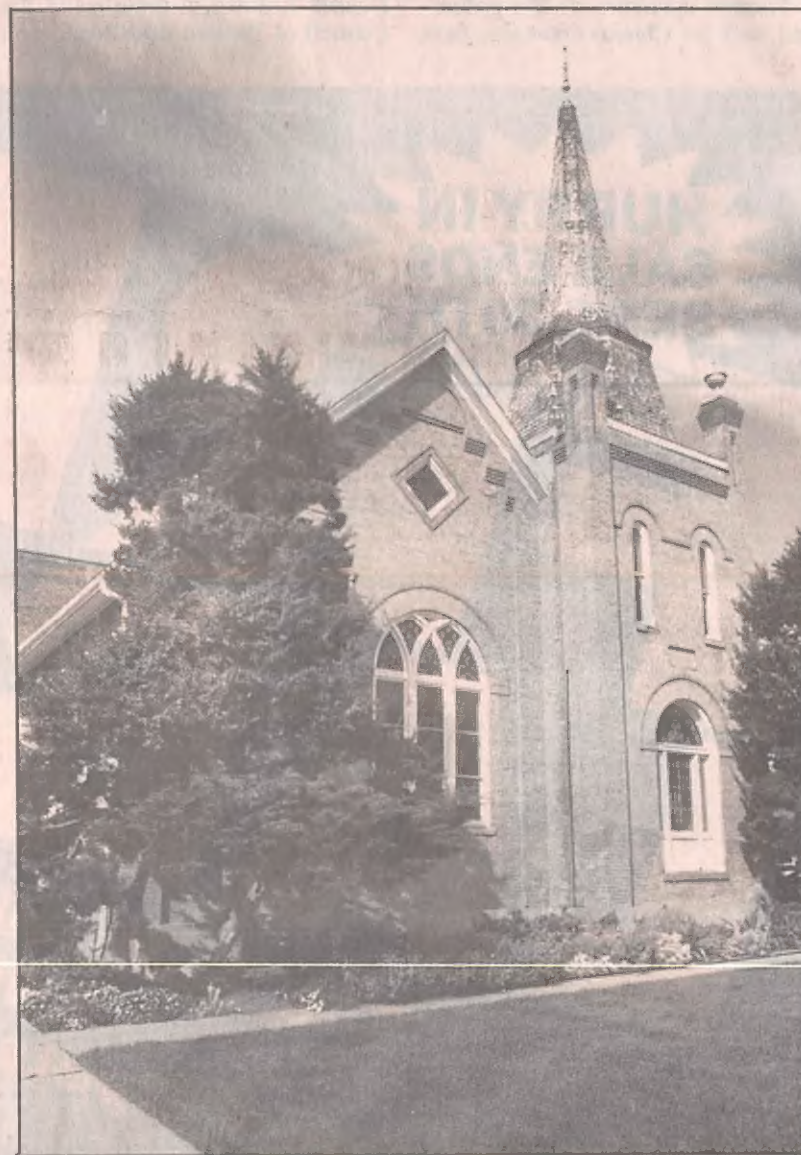
The Heber City Municipal Building/Wasatch State Tabernacle, 75 N. Main St., Heber, was saved from destruction to be gutted and renovated for office buildings. It stands as one of the city's most famous landmark buildings, originally completed in 1889.

takers, the LDS Church wanted it demolished.

"The mayor back then was Malcom Beck and he refused to demolish it and we were allowed to purchase it," said Bigelow.

op Granary/Art Gallery, 100 N. Main Street, Ephraim; and the Graybill Building, 541 Main Street, Park City.

Honorable mention went to the Effie Marshall Home, 91 E. Main Street, Minersville.



The M.L. Bigelow & Co. Inc./Second Ward Building, 130 W. 100 South, American Fork, is one of four historic American Fork churches preserved in their near-original states. The current owners use the church, once slated for destruction, as a place to build organs.

Herald Photos/Brian Tregaskis

One of the few remaining unrestored areas of the Heber City Municipal Building/Wasatch State Tabernacle is the bell tower area. The restored tabernacle houses offices.



The owners of the Kearns Hotel, 94 W. 200 South, Springville, are slated to receive an award for their efforts in restoring the 101-year-old building.